



## Irthington Village School Missing Child Procedures

### Review Schedule

Revisions made	By Whom	Date
Original	LH	October 2015
Original	LH	October 2016
Original	LH	October 2017
Original	LH	October 2018
Original	LH	October 2019
Original	LH	October 2020
Original	LH	September 2021

# MISSING CHILD PROCEDURES

In the event of a child going missing whilst in the care of the school staff, the school will put into practice the 'Missing Child Procedures' below. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

Registration is taken at the beginning of the school day and immediately after the pupils' return from lunch in order to ensure that all are accounted for.

In the event that a child is lost, staff will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to other pupils at the school while the procedures are followed.

Where a child is thought to have been abducted the Head teacher/Senior Teacher will **immediately** call the police.

Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the child's records e.g. whether the child has never gone missing before or has a record of leaving school without permission. Where the child's behaviour record indicates a history of running away then the Head teacher will contact the County Psychological Service on Tel: 01900 706453.

## Procedures Aimed at Reducing the Risk of a Missing Child

### Start of the School Day:

- The school should ensure parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa;
- There are clear procedures for welcoming pupils into the School. The school doors are closed at 8.55am. After this time, pupils must report to the main school office via the main entrance;
- Teachers are in their classrooms by 8.40am;
- The main building has access entrance via the main reception and through Class 3. Signage directs all visitors to this entrance. Visitors to the school are channelled through reception. Even when reception is not staffed, reception remains the point to which all enquiries should be directed;

### During Lesson Time:

- Staff complete registers promptly– morning and afternoons. All staff must ensure that external gates to any outside area are closed when children are playing outside and locks are secured;
- If children leave their classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom;
- Updated contact information for parents/carers is sought regularly and maintained;
- Behaviour Management Plans are in place for pupils with challenging behaviour including those who may be 'flight risks';

### During Break Times:

- Sufficient numbers of duty staff should be on the playground before children come out and for the duration of the break;
- External gates remain closed when children are on the playground;
- Staff patrol all areas of the playground throughout the session.

### End of the School Day:

- Gates are opened at 3.30pm;
- Children leave by assigned exits;
- All children are collected by their parent/carer from the school yard. Staff allow children to leave when they see the parent/carer; permission may be given for children in year 5/6 who live in the village to walk or cycle home alone by prior arrangement with the Headteacher. Permission is recorded and no child is allowed to leave school unaccompanied without recorded approval.

### **Non-Collection of Pupils:**

- Children who are not collected go to the main entrance to wait with their teacher or another suitable member of staff;
- 10 minutes after non-collection at the normal time telephone the parent/carer emergency contact numbers in hierarchical order;
- If no response from parent/carer emergency contact numbers after a number of attempts have been made:
  - 30 minutes after non-collection at the normal time contact the Police and explain that a child has not been collected;
  - 1 hour after non-collection at normal time we will contact Cumbria Safeguarding Hub (Tel: 0333 240 1727) and ask for advice;
- Throughout this time and prior to contacting either the Police or the Safeguarding Hub, continuous attempts must be made to contact the normal emergency contact numbers provided by the parent/carer.

### **Off-Site Visits:**

The school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that whilst children are on off-site visits, they are appropriately supervised by members of staff, parents, volunteers and others.

- Thorough risk assessments are conducted and adequate staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave the school premises;
- Permission from parents is obtained generically when pupils first start their school career, for all residential trips, trips abroad and adventurous activities and parents are notified in advance of all off-site visits;
- Mobile telephones are taken on every visit and emergency contact numbers left at school (and on-line with Matthew Ellis at Evolve for Level 2 trips)
- If the off-site visit involves coach travel or travel on public transport, the group will be counted on and off the vehicle with an additional head count before the vehicle moves off;
- At the venue, all children will be given details of where the meeting point is;
- In some circumstances, and where it is deemed appropriate, children will be provided with a card which indicates the school name and the name and telephone number of the accommodation at which they are staying;
- Where children are given 'free-time' they will be required to stay together in groups of not less than 3.

### **After School Clubs:**

- Thorough risk assessments will be carried out;
- A register of pupils should be taken;
- Consent should be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of how the children are to get home and with whom.

### **Procedures in the Event of Child Going Missing**

#### ***During the normal school day***

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while at school:

- Keep calm;
  - The following lists held in the school office will be checked:
    - Attendance Registers;
    - Off Site Visit Records;
    - Music lesson lists;
    - Lists of those attending other schools e.g. transition activities.
- If child has registered and the teacher suspects that a child is missing from a lesson or activity, raise the alarm by contacting the Head teacher or the school office immediately;
- Class teacher will ensure that remaining pupils are safe and properly supervised. This may necessitate doubling up for a short time;
- Two members of staff (usually the headteacher + 1) will make a search of the premises and outdoor areas. All indoor rooms to be checked systematically first followed by outdoor play areas, car park and adjacent road(s). This will be undertaken as quickly as possible;

- Whilst the initial search is made, the person in charge will make enquiries of all adults in the school to establish the last sighting and time, clothes that the child was wearing, and the possible mental state of the child (happy, upset etc.);
- Where appropriate, check with the pupil's known friends to establish whether or not they are aware of his/her whereabouts;
- If the child has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing, parents/carers will be contacted using emergency contact details provided. Encourage them to keep calm and enquire as to whether the child has returned home or might be making his/her way home. Ask the parent to come to the school using the normal route that the child would take and to walk if appropriate. Ask them to bring a recent photograph of their child;
- Organise a wider search of the area surrounding the school. Mobile phones should be used in order to effectively communicate with the school;
- If the child is not found during the initial search (after 15 minutes) the Head teacher will alert the Police (999), Cumbria Safeguarding Hub on Tel: 0333 2401727 and our Health & Safety Services Provider: Evolve
- If the parent arrives at the setting and their child is still missing, ask the parent to return home in the event that their child has managed to make his/her way home by an alternative route. Ask them to remain at home and to contact others who the child may have gone to visit. The parent must be contactable by the school at any time in the event that the child is found;
- Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed. It may be possible to plug a separate handset into the fax line temporarily to help the short-term situation.

#### **Off-Site Visits:**

- If a child is lost at a venue, all other pupils will be required to remain with their visit leader and assemble at a pre-determined meeting point until the child is located;
- A head count will be taken to confirm all those who are present. Supervising adults will be asked when the child was last seen and what clothes he/she was wearing. All adults will be asked to look for the child as they proceed with the visit.
- The Visit Leader will appoint a responsible adult from the group to conduct a search of the immediate area and to alert anyone else who may be able to assist, keeping in contact with the Visit Leader via mobile phone;
- A member of staff or other responsible adult will remain at the meeting point in the event that the missing pupil turns up there;
- The Visit Leader will alert officials at the venue that there is a missing child and take their advice;
- The Visit Leader will alert the school who will contact the parents/carers via the emergency contact details;
- If the pupil remains unaccounted for for more than 15 minutes maximum, the police will be informed and their advice taken;
- The school will contact the Health & Safety Services Provider: Evolve
- If by the end of the visit, if the child is still missing, arrangements will be made for a member of staff or other responsible adult to remain at the venue or vicinity until the child is located. This will be in conjunction with the local Police, the school setting and the parents/carers.